for reinforcements; and President Buchanan and his Secretary of War, Mr. Holt, who, notwithstanding their unwillingness to do anything which would bring on a collision, were yet prepared to fulfil their promise to Anderson and send him succor when he should demand it, were amazed[1] to find at the close of the month of February that the task of reinforcing Fort Sumter was probably beyond the resources then at the disposal of the Government.

In fact, early in February, an expedition for the reinforcement of Fort Sumter had been prepared, and would, no doubt, have been despatched at any time, if Anderson had asked for aid. The force, however, which was to have gone, while very possibly sufficient for the purpose had it been sent in January, would have been far too weak to have effected its object in the middle or latter part of February, when the enemy's batteries had received their proper armament. It is true, enough had been said by Major Anderson in his numerous letters to the Adjutant-General and by Captain Foster in his letters to the Chief of Engineers to acquaint the Government with all the material facts of the situation ; but as there was no desire on the part of the "War Department to despatch the expeditionary force, and as there was great unwillingness on the part of Major

Anderson
to ask for it, believing, as he did, that civil war would result from the attempt to send him reinforcements, it is not strange that the time should have slipped away, and that the gravity of the situation

[1] Crawford, 284.